The Idea of Wilderness

How has wilderness emerged over the decades to become appreciated, and in many cases, preserved?

Changing concepts of American wilderness have been chronicled over time by an array of authors ranging from philosopher Henry David Thoreau and conservationist John Muir to historian Bernard DeVoto and Howard Zahniser, primary author of the Wilderness Act. Artists and photographers have also played important roles in increasing awareness about the value of wilderness.

This visual time line introduces some of the individuals and events that have affected the idea of wilderness in America. To view further details and read related excerpts, go to the *NPS Wilderness Visitor* website at **www.wilderness.nps.gov**.

1500-1700 - Explorers and colonists from Europe, Russia, and Africa advance into relatively wild lands of North America inhabited by indigenous peoples and abundant animal life. Wilderness is still feared by many and viewed as something to be conquered.

1700-1800 - Fur trappers, mountain men, and explorers push the frontier boundary westward as civilization consumes limited natural resources. Some individuals express a growing appreciation for nature and uncivilized environments.

1800-1850 - The Louisiana Purchase doubles the size of the Republic. Romanticism in art and literature changes perceptions of nature from the fearsome unknown to a reservoir for spiritual awareness and renewal.

1850-1900 - The Romantic Movement further influences appreciation of nature; yet, civilization displaces wildlife and American Indians, signaling an end to what was perceived as the western frontier.

1900-1950 - The Antiquities Act allows U.S. presidents to proclaim national monuments. The National Park System is established, setting the stage for unprecedented preservation of natural and cultural resources.

1950-2000 - Public awareness, activism, and conservation efforts lead to landmark environmental legislation, including the Wilderness Act, which presently protects more than 100 million acres of wild lands.

1500-1700

These centuries characterize North America's wilderness as a challenging and mysterious force to be revered or feared, or in many cases, tamed and utilized.

1539 - Esteban Dorantes (Estevanico), a Moorish slave, is sent by the Viceroy of New Spain in search of the Seven Cities of Gold. Instead, he discovers the Pueblos of the Zuni Indians. His discovery of the lands that are now Arizona and New Mexico leads to the exploration of the entire American Southwest.

1607 - Pioneers from England land near the James River to "tame the wilderness" and establish the colony of Jamestown, Virginia.

1620 - The journals of William Bradford, governor of Plymouth Colony, describe wilderness as dark, savage, and sinister.

1629 - John Winthrop, defending his decision to settle in the wilderness of the New World argues, "Why remain in England and suffer a whole Continent to lie waste without any improvement."

1662 - Michael Wigglesworth, in *God's Controversy with New England,* published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, states that outside the settlements there was nothing but "A waste and howling wilderness, where none inhabited But hellish fiends, and brutish men That Devils worshipped."

1681 - William Penn includes in the *Conditions and Concessions* to be agreed upon between the administration and the settler the stipulation that "in clearing ground, care be taken to leave an acre of trees for every five acres cleared" in the new colony of Pennsylvania.

1700-1800

Commerce pushes diverse explorers and entrepreneurs farther west.

Some realize the importance of conservation as civilization begins to consume natural resources. Eighteenth-century perspectives on wilderness range from appreciation of nature to exploitation of resources.

1702-1758 - Jonathan Edwards, the prominent Calvinist pastor and philosopher, expresses emotion and admiration of nature and its relationship to God. Puritans follow instead the thoughts of Cotton Mather: "What is not useful is vicious."

1741 - The Europeans find Alaska when Alexei Chirikof, with the Vitus Bering expedition from Russia, sights land on July 15.

1744 - Benjamin Franklin publishes a description of the "Pennsylvania fireplace," or Franklin stove, the first promotion of an economical use of wood to conserve natural resources.

1764 - French fur trapper Pierre Laclede and his stepson Auguste Chouteau found a settlement on the Missouri River. It later becomes St. Louis, the fur trade capital of the West.

1775 - Daniel Boone blazes the Wilderness Trail to establish Boonesborough on land between the Kentucky and Cumberland Rivers, expanding European settlement.

1779 - Haitian-born fur trapper Jean Baptiste Point DuSable establishes a trading post at the mouth of the Chicago River, contributing to the fur trade's role in the exploration of the West.

1798 - English romantic poet William Wordsworth begins to write a philosophical work on nature, man, and society to be entitled "The Recluse."

1800-1850

These decades are a time of discovery, change, and reflection. Those distanced from the western frontier consider man's harmonious relationship to nature.

On the frontline of westward expansion, some authors and artists portray a land of mythical qualities. For some, this period is a time of man versus man; for others, it is a time of man versus nature.

1803 - President Thomas Jefferson engineers the Louisiana Purchase, doubling the size of the Republic. He urges Congress to fund the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition.

1804-1806 - William Clark's African-American servant, York, contributes to the success of Lewis and Clark's expedition by serving as scout, guard, hunter, and canoe paddler.

1804 - Washington Allston produces "The Deluge" and "The Rising of a Thunderstorm at Sea," some of the first American landscapes to portray an intimacy between man and nature.

1805 - Shoshoni woman Sacajawea joins the Lewis and Clark expedition as it departs from Fort Mandan. Her interpretation skills and identification of places, plants, and animals along the way contribute greatly to the success of the expedition.

1816 - Lord Byron writes "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, There is a rapture on the lonely shore. There is society where none intrudes . . . I love not man the less, but Nature more."

1817- William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis" and "Fragment," published in *North American Review,* recognize a new approach to the contemplation of nature. Bryant's political involvement later initiates the "park movement."

1820 - Haitian-born artist, John James Audubon, begins illustrating all of America's birds for his masterwork, *Birds of America*, capturing realistic images of wild America in a lasting visual record as civilization threatens the survival of many species.

1822 - Pawnee Chief Petalesharo presents a speech to President Monroe describing the nomadic way of American Indian life and notes that numbers of game animals such as buffalo are decreasing due to encroaching settlement and exploration.

1823 - James Fenimore Cooper presents a treatment of man versus nature, and some of the first concepts of conservation of natural resources, in *The Pioneers*. His later fictional works pit progress against wilderness.

1824 - Russians start to explore mainland Alaska, leading to the documentation of the Kuskokwim, Yukon, and Koyokuk rivers.

1827 - Thomas Cole, a leader in the romantic landscape painting movement known as the Hudson River School, produces "St. John Preaching in the Wilderness." Cole believed that the wilderness was passing away and that there was a "necessity of saving and perpetuating its features."

1830 - George Catlin sets out to paint all the Indian tribes west to the Pacific. His idea of "a Nation's park" was published in his articles for New York's *Daily Commercial Advertiser*. His original concept of natural reserves included American Indians as living parts of the park ecology.

1836 - Ralph Waldo Emerson publishes "Nature." The essay brings about profound changes in American attitudes toward nature. Emerson's "philosopher's camp" is a precursor to camping, leisure, and appreciation of nature by many.

1837 - Working for the American Fur Company, painter Alfred Jacob Miller produces some of the most accurate documentation of the West and its Indian tribes for posterity.

1838 - The U.S. Exploring Expedition departs for the Pacific led by Charles Wilkes, geologist James Dana, and artist Titian Peale. The group conducts a six-week study of the Mauna Loa Volcano in Hawaii, pushing exploration of wild lands even farther west.

1840-1870 - "The Age of Agassiz"—Swiss scientist Louis Agassiz teaches nature study at Harvard and initiates the establishment of Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology.

1842 - Trapper Jim Bridger establishes the Oregon Trail, opening a route to the Pacific Northwest for settlers.

1849 - In his first edition of *The Oregon Trail*, author Francis Parkman calls the land between the Arkansas and Missouri rivers "the great American desert." Although Parkman's diary mentions encounters with diverse people, his portrayal of a frontier explored only by European descendants introduces the myth of the West to the public.

1850-1900

As the American frontier surrenders to human settlement, philosophers, writers, conservationists, and politicians work to interpret the value of natural resources in a country of seemingly endless bounty.

1850 - African-American fur trapper-explorer James Beckwourth leads the first wagon train of settlers through the Sierra Nevadas.

1854 - Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, author of *Walden*, writes that wilderness sanctuaries are the "need of civilized man."

1856 - Artist Thomas A. Ayers' lithographs introduce Yosemite to the East. *Country Gentleman* publishes descriptions of Yosemite Valley as "the most striking natural wonder on the Pacific."

1861 - Photographs by Carleton E. Watkins make Yosemite Valley famous, luring recreational explorers into California's wild lands.

1864 - Frederick Law Olmstead pushes for protection of Yosemite Valley and is first to advocate the idea of placing certain scenic natural areas under government protection.

1864 - A major turning point in the conservation movement occurs when George P. Marsh publishes *Man and Nature*, warning citizens to stop the devastation of natural resources. Marsh later discusses the idea of public parks and offers a policy comparable to what will become NPS policy 50 years later.

1864 - President Abraham Lincoln signs the Yosemite Bill, ceding the Valley to California, "to protect an area and conserve it for recreational enjoyment."

1865 - Walt Whitman writes "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun," which reflects contradictory public views of conquering nature or respecting it.

1867 - The Alaska Purchase is signed by President Andrew Johnson, adding 365 million acres of public lands to the United States.

1867 - Kiowa Chief Satanta recognizes the effects of encroaching civilization and voices opposition to construction of the Union Pacific Railroad at a council held at Fort Larned, Kansas.

1869 - Transcontinental travel becomes available to the public as the Union and Pacific Railroads meet at Promontory Point, Utah.

1871 - Yellowstone is documented by the official U.S. expedition of geologist Ferdinand Hayden, painters Henry Elliott and Thomas Moran, and photographer William Henry Jackson.

1872 - Artist Thomas Moran exhibits paintings of Yellowstone, helping to promote establishment of the first national park. Yellowstone is designated a "public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people."

1874 - Escorted by the 7th U.S. Cavalry under the command of Lieutenant George A. Custer, surveyors penetrate South Dakota's Black Hills, wild lands considered sacred by the Sioux.

1874 - John Wesley Powell writes a series of articles that generate public interest in the Grand Canyon, drawing tourists westward.

1877 - Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce surrenders 30 miles from the U.S.-Canada border stating, "I will fight no more forever."

1885 - New York State establishes the Adirondack State Park.

1890 - The needless slaughter of 150 Sioux at Wounded Knee in South Dakota results in the surrender of American Indians, bringing the wars between whites and Indian tribes to an end.

1890 - The Yosemite Reserves Act is signed into law by President Benjamin Harrison, creating Yosemite National Park.

1892 - Conservationist John Muir organizes the Sierra Club to enlist public and federal support for preservation of wilderness.

1893 - Professor Frederick Jackson Turner states in his paper, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," that the American frontier is closed.

1894 - New York State Constitutional Convention inserts clause to protect state forest preserve lands "forever as wild forest lands."

1898 - Gifford Pinchot takes office as chief of the Division of Forestry, later organized into the National Forest Service in 1905, advancing utilitarian conservation of natural resources.

1900-1950

These decades are the era of some of the most ardent battles for wilderness preservation of our time.

Train travel makes national parks accessible to all as preservationists work diligently to save natural areas.

1900 - Edward S. Curtis exhibits his ethnological photographic studies of vanishing western Indian tribes.

1901 - The Santa Fe Railway makes the Grand Canyon accessible to the public by train, followed 19 years later throughout the Southwest by the Union Pacific Railroad.

1903 - President Roosevelt sets aside vast acres of federal land for protection of their natural and cultural features and creates the first national wildlife refuge at Florida's Pelican Island.

1906 - Passage of the Antiquities Act allows U.S. presidents to proclaim national monuments. Devil's Tower becomes the first national monument.

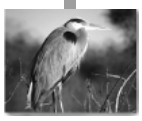
1913 - A landmark conservation battle is lost when legislation allows construction of a dam in Hetch Hetchy Valley inside Yosemite National Park.

1916 - President Woodrow Wilson signs the Organic Act, which establishes the National Park Service.

1920 - Landscape architect Arthur Carhart proposes the first designation of an undeveloped and roadless national forest area at Trapper's Lake in Colorado.

1924 - Ecologist Aldo Leopold achieves designation of the first U.S. Forest Service wilderness area—the Gila Wilderness in the Gila National Forest, New Mexico.

1935 - Forester Robert Marshall becomes principal founder of the Wilderness Society, leading the way for the modern American wilderness preservation movement.



1947 - Everglades National Park founding legislation includes specific language that identifies preservation of wilderness—still one of the strongest mandates in the NPS to preserve wild lands.

1950-2000

The ecologic and economic futures of entire ecosystems became a growing concern during these decades.

Public awareness, activism, and conservation efforts lead to landmark environmental legislation including the Wilderness Act.

1955 - Sierra Club Executive Director David Brower and Wilderness Society Executive Secretary Howard Zahniser lead successful opposition to development of Echo Park Dam in Dinosaur National Monument, part of the National Park System.

1962 - Scientist Rachel Carson publishes *Silent Spring*, stirring public consciousness about pesticides and the environment.

1964 - Howard Zahniser authors the Wilderness Act; passed by Congress, it created the National Wilderness Preservation System.

1970 - Senator Gaylord Nelson founds Earth Day, focusing national attention on the environment.

1970 - Petrified Forest N.P. and Craters of the Moon N.M. become the first NPS sites to include designated wilderness areas.

1975 - The Eastern Wilderness Areas Act is passed, supporting the Wilderness Act's purpose of building a truly *national* NWPS.

1980 - President Jimmy Carter signs the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act adding 55 million acres of designated wilderness to the NWPS.

1980 - The Wilderness Society establishes the Ansel Adams Conservation Award, naming photographer Adams first recipient.

1994 - The California Desert Protection Act is passed.

1996 - Creation of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument includes 1.7 million acres of the most remote wild lands in the lower 48 states.

1999 - President William Clinton proposes Lands Legacy Initiative that includes a call on Congress to grant permanent wilderness protection for more than 5 million acres in 17 national parks and monuments.

Wilderness Letter, Wallace Stegner, 1960

Los Altos, Calif.
Dec. 3, 1960

David E. Pesonen
Wildland Research Center
Agricultural Experiment Station
243 Mulford Hall
University of California
Berkeley 4, Calif.

Dear Mr. Pesonen:

I believe that you are working on the wilderness portion of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission's report. If I may, I should like to urge some arguments for wilderness preservation that involve recreation, as it is ordinarily conceived, hardly at all. Hunting, fishing, hiking, mountain-climbing, camping, photography, and the enjoyment of natural scenery will all, surely, figure in your report. So will the wilderness as a genetic reserve, a scientific yardstick by which we may measure the world in its natural balance against the world in its man-made imbalance. What I want to speak for is not so much the wilderness uses, valuable as those are, but the wilderness *idea*, which is a resource in itself. Being an intangible and spiritual resource, it will seem mystical to the practical-minded—but then anything that cannot be moved by a bulldozer is likely to seem mystical to them.

I want to speak for the wilderness idea as something that has helped form our character and that has certainly shaped our history as a people. It has no more to do with recreation than churches have to do with recreation, or than the strenuousness and optimism and expansiveness of what historians call the "American Dream" have to do with recreation. Nevertheless, since it is only in this recreation survey that the values of wilderness are being compiled, I hope you will permit me to insert this idea between the leaves, as it were, of the recreation report.

Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clear air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste. And so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to the other animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong in it. Without any remaining wilderness we are committed wholly, without chance for even momentary reflection and rest, to a headlong drive into our technological termite-life, the Brave New World of a completely man-controlled environment. We need wilderness preserved – as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds—because it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed. The reminder and the reassurance that it is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in ten years set foot in it. It is good for us when we are young, because of the incomparable sanity it can bring briefly, as vacation and rest, into our insane lives. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as idea.

We are a wild species, as Darwin pointed out. Nobody ever tamed or domesticated or scientifically bred us. But for at least three millennia we have been engaged in a cumulative and ambitious race to modify and gain control of our environment, and in the process we have come close to domesticating ourselves. Not many people are likely, any

more, to look upon what we call "progress" as an unmixed blessing. Just as surely as it has brought us increased comfort and more material goods, it has brought us spiritual losses, and it threatens now to become the Frankenstein that will destroy us. One means of sanity is to retain a hold on the natural world, to remain, insofar as we can, good animals. Americans still have that chance, more than many peoples; for while we were demonstrating ourselves the most efficient and ruthless environment busters in history, and slashing and burning and cutting our way through a wilderness continent, the wilderness was working on us. It remains in us as surely as Indian names remain on the land. If the abstract dream of human liberty and human dignity became, in America, something more than an abstract dream, mark it down at least partially to the fact that we were in subtle ways subdued by what we conquered.

The Connecticut Yankee, sending likely candidates from King Arthur's unjust kingdom to his Man Factory for rehabilitation, was over-optimistic, as he later admitted. These things cannot be forced, they have to grow. To make such a man, such a democrat, such a believer in human individual dignity, as Mark Twain himself, the frontier was necessary, Hannibal and the Mississippi and Virginia City, and reaching out from those the wilderness; the wilderness as opportunity and as idea, the thing that has helped to make an American different from and, until we forget it in the roar of our industrial cities, more fortunate than other men. For an American, insofar as he is new and different at all, is a civilized man who has renewed himself in the wild. The American experience has been the confrontation by old peoples and cultures of a world as new as if it had just risen from the sea. That gave us our hope and our excitement, and the hope and excitement can be passed on to Americans, Americans who never saw any phase of the frontier. But only so long as we keep the remainder of our wild as a reserve and a promise—a sort of wilderness bank.

As a novelist, I may perhaps be forgiven for taking literature as a reflection, indirect but profoundly true, of our national consciousness. And our literature, as perhaps you are aware, is sick, embittered, losing its mind, losing its faith. Our novelists are the declared enemies of their society. There has hardly been a serious or important novel in this century that did not repudiate in part or in whole American technological culture for its commercialism, its vulgarity, and the way in which it has dirtied a clean continent and a clean dream. I do not expect that the preservation of our remaining wilderness is going to cure this condition. But the mere example that we can as a nation apply some other criteria than commercial and exploitative considerations would be heartening to many Americans, novelists or otherwise. We need to demonstrate our acceptance of the natural world, including ourselves; we need the spiritual refreshment that being natural can produce. And one of the best places for us to get that is in the wilderness where the fun houses, the bulldozers, and the pavements of our civilization are shut out.

Sherwood Anderson, in a letter to Waldo Frank in the 1920s, said it better than I can. "Is it not likely that when the country was new and men were often alone in the fields and the forest they got a sense of bigness outside themselves that has now in some way been lost . . . Mystery whispered in the grass, played in the branches of trees overhead, was caught up and blown across the American line in clouds of dust at evening on the prairies . . . I am old enough to remember tales that strengthen my belief in a deep semi-religious influence that was formerly at work among our people. The flavor of it hangs over the best work of Mark Twain . . . I can remember old fellows in my home town speaking feelingly of an evening spent on the big empty plains. It had taken the shrillness out of them. They had learned the trick of quiet . . . "

We could learn it too, even yet; even our children and grandchildren could learn it. But only if we save, for just such absolutely non-recreational, impractical, and mystical uses as this, all the wild that still remains to us.

It seems to me significant that the distinct downturn in our literature from hope to bitterness took place almost at the precise time when the frontier officially came to an end, in 1890, and when the American way of life had begun to turn strongly urban and industrial. The more urban it has become, and the more frantic with technological change, the sicker and more embittered our literature, and I believe our people, have become. For myself, I grew up on the empty plains of Saskatchewan and Montana and in the mountains of Utah, and I put a very high valuation on what those places gave me. And if I had not been able periodically to renew myself in the mountains and deserts of western America I would be very nearly bughouse. Even when I can't get to the back country, the thought of the colored deserts of southern Utah, or the reassurance that there are still stretches of prairie where the world can be instantaneously perceived as disk and bowl, and where the little but intensely important human being is exposed to the five directions and the thirty-six winds, is a positive consolation. The idea alone can sustain me. But as the wilderness areas are progressively exploited or "improved," as the jeeps and bulldozers of uranium prospectors scar up the deserts and the roads are cut into the alpine timberlands, and as the remnants of the unspoiled and natural world are progressively eroded, every such loss is a little death in me. In us.

I am not moved by the argument that those wilderness areas which have already been exposed to grazing or mining are already deflowered, and so might as well be "harvested." For mining I cannot say much good except that its operations are generally short-lived. The extractable wealth is taken and the shafts, the tailings, and the ruins left, and in a dry country such as the American West the wounds men make in the earth do not quickly heal. Still, they are only wounds; they aren't absolutely mortal. Better a wounded wilderness than none at all. And as for grazing, if it is strictly controlled so that it does not destroy the ground cover, damage the ecology, or compete with the wildlife it is in itself nothing that need conflict with the wilderness feeling or the validity of the wilderness experience. I have known enough range cattle to recognize them as wild animals; and the people who herd them have, in the wilderness context, the dignity of rareness; they belong on the frontier, moreover, and have a look of rightness. The invasion they make on the virgin country is a sort of invasion that is as old as Neolithic man, and they can, in moderation, even emphasize a man's feeling of belonging to the natural world. Under surveillance, they can belong; under control, they need not deface or mar. I do not believe that in wilderness areas where grazing has never been permitted, it should be permitted; but I do not believe either that an otherwise untouched wilderness should be eliminated from the preservation plan because of limited existing uses such as grazing which are in consonance with the frontier condition and image.

Let me say something on the subject of the kinds of wilderness worth preserving. Most of those areas contemplated are in the national forests and in high mountain country. For all the usual recreational purposes, the alpine and forest wildernesses are obviously the most important, both as genetic banks and as beauty spots. But for the spiritual renewal, the recognition of identity, the birth of awe, other kinds will serve every bit as well. Perhaps, because they are less friendly to life, more abstractly nonhuman, they will serve even better. On our Saskatchewan prairie, the nearest neighbor was four miles away, and at night we saw only two lights on all the dark rounding earth. The earth was full of animals—field mice, ground squirrels, weasels, ferrets, badgers, coyotes, burrowing owls, snakes. I knew them as my little brothers, as fellow creatures, and I have never been able to look upon animals in any other way since. The sky in that country came clear down to the ground on every side, and it was full of great weathers, and cloud, and winds, and hawks. I hope I learned something from knowing intimately the creatures of the earth; I hope I learned something from looking a long way, from looking up, from being much alone. A prairie like that, one big enough to carry the eye clear to the sinking, rounding horizon, can be as lonely and grand and simple in its forms as the sea. It is as good a place as any for the wilderness experience to happen; the vanishing prairie is as worth preserving for the wilderness idea as the alpine forests.

So are great reaches or our western deserts, scarred somewhat by prospectors but otherwise open, beautiful, waiting, close to whatever God you want to see in them. Just as a sample, let me suggest the Robbers' Roost country in Wayne County, Utah, near the Capitol Reef National Monument. In the desert climate the dozer and jeep tracks will not soon melt back into the earth, but the country has a way of making the scars insignificant. It is a lovely and terrible wilderness, such a wilderness as Christ and the prophets went out into; harshly and beautifully colored, broken and worn until its bones are exposed, its great sky without a smudge or taint from Technocracy, and in hidden corners and pockets under its cliffs the sudden poetry of springs. Save a piece of country like that intact, and it does not matter in the slightest that only a few people every year go into it. That is precisely its value. Roads would be a desecration, crowds would ruin it. But those who haven't the strength or youth to go into it and live can simply sit and look. They can look two hundred miles, clear into Colorado; and looking down over the cliffs and canyons of the San Rafael Swell and the Robbers' Roost they can also look as deeply into themselves as anywhere I know. And if they can't even get to the places on the Aquarius Plateau where the present roads will carry them, they can simply contemplate the *idea*, take pleasure in the fact that such a timeless and uncontrolled part of the earth is still there.

These are some of the things wilderness can do for us. That is the reason we need to put into effect, for its preservation, some other principle than the principles of exploitation or "usefulness" or even recreation. We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope.

Very sincerely yours,
Wallace Stegner
1960